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## 2012 Season Review

If you thought that 2011 was a bit damp - well 2012 was positively aquatic in comparison, and while 2011 may have seen the wettest August on record, 2012 went one better to become the wettest summer for a hundred years!

How did that affect the fishing? Well it meant that fewer trips to the river were possible and this is reflected in the overall number of permits sold, in catch returns and in the Committee Members' logbook results.

However, on a more positive note, it probably meant that more migratory fish were able to get over the weirs and up the river to spawn. Hopefully this will result in more fish in future seasons. We certainly saw more sea trout caught in 2012 and despite the weather, our most successful angler still managed to record 300+ brown trout, with the wet fly doing better than the dry fly.

422 permits were sold in 2012 and 87 usable catch returns were completed (20.8%). Forty-four sea trout were caught (31 returned, estimated weight ranging between 3 and 9½lb), plus 2 salmon (9½lb and 5lb). Many anglers reported their best brown trout weight at 1 lb, with 6 fish over 2lb. Several otters were seen at various points along the river and a mink was also reported.



*Photo: Barbara Campbell*

## 2013 AGM

**Monday**

**January 21<sup>st</sup>**

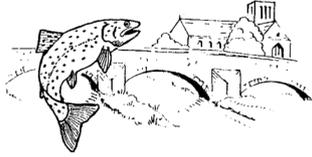
**7:30 PM**

**The Town House  
Haddington**

**Guest Speaker  
Effie Renton**

**Friends of the River Tyne**

The story of 2012 – Knowes Ford in July.



## Committee Update

### Changing Role

In last year's ELAA Newsletter we explained that the role of the Association is changing from being simply a fishing club to taking on a broader role with an emphasis on conservation and habitat improvement. This approach, which is widely recognised as good fisheries management practice and based on accepted fisheries science, is rooted in the belief that the essential requirement for a productive fishery is a clean, healthy, well-managed and well monitored river – not simply a stretch of water with fish in it, but a complete, interdependent eco-system of plants, invertebrates, birds and mammals, as well as fish.

### Management Plan

To achieve this ELAA works with a number of public bodies, such as the Forth District Salmon Fishery Board, Forth Fisheries Trust and SEPA who can advise on good practice and offer professional expertise. ELAA Committee is producing a Management Plan containing a wide range of information relating to the river and ELAA's activities, such as maps, electro fishing data, 5-Year Plan and catch statistics.

### Funding

The Management Plan, as well as providing valuable scientific data, can also help ELAA demonstrate to funding bodies that the Association is serious about the work it does on the Tyne to protect and improve the fishery, thereby enhancing our chances of obtaining further funding for projects like improving passage for migratory fish.

### Practical Activities

In addition to the Management Plan, ELAA Committee members (and other volunteers) also carry out practical activities to improve the fishing on the Tyne. These include clearing spawning burns, establishing a wild

fishery above Haddington, promoting catch and release, monitoring fish and invertebrate populations as well as raising ELAA's profile at Haddington Show (but not in 2012 unfortunately!).

### Essential Tasks

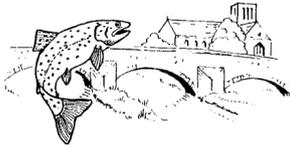
As well as these activities the Committee still carries out the essential, traditional tasks such as the production and distribution of permits and catch returns, managing the Association's finances, maintaining relations with riparian owners and stocking the river.



The Committee in action.

*Photo: Tony Hawkins*

To contact the Committee, e-mail your comments or questions to [fishing@elaa.co.uk](mailto:fishing@elaa.co.uk). Or you can speak to Committee members in person at the **AGM: Monday January 21<sup>st</sup> 7:30 PM** at the **Town House, Haddington**



## A Lesson Worth Learning – Will Shaw

Fly fishing is a funny old sport. I never hear golfers saying “I can’t see the point of being able to hit the ball further, or more accurately, or with less effort”. Nor do I hear birdwatchers exclaim “you don’t really need to know the difference between birds to have a great day out”.

The point is, whether it’s fly fishing, golf, or birdwatching, there are some basic skills that are worth acquiring to help you enjoy your day more. But it only seems to be in fly fishing that there’s a real resistance to formal learning. Listening to some people you’d think we’re meant to mysteriously absorb key skills by some form of osmosis, maybe seeping through our waders day by day until one day we wake up and find we’re experts.

Learning by experience is a great way of getting skills and probably the most common. But if that’s all you have to go on it can take years, and sometimes you hit a brick wall. No matter how hard you try problems still persist: casts tangle and don’t go far enough, arms and shoulders ache, the fish disappear or steadfastly refuse to rise to your flies. At this point you have a choice, you can carry on frustrated and accept that “this is just how it is”, or you can do something about it. Buy a book, try Google, talk to friends, or even get a lesson.

Now I know what you’re thinking. He’s an instructor. Of course he’s going to want me to have a lesson. Well, duh! Of course I’d love you to have a lesson. But that’s not what I’m talking about.

One of the joys of fly fishing is its simplicity: a rod, a line, a leader and some flies and you’re fishing. At the same time our sport is as broad and as deep as you want it to be: casting, knot tying, fly tying, entomology, field craft, ecology, conservation. There’s a lifetime of

skills and knowledge to acquire which make our sport the richest, most fascinating pastime there is. The more you learn, the more fun you have. Open your mind. Dig deeper.

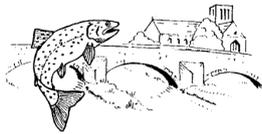


You see this in the very best anglers, simple enjoyment based on a deep understanding. You also see this in the very best angling clubs. The ELAA is committed to providing its members with the simple enjoyment of great fishing at a reasonable price, and it increasingly does this through a deep understanding of the Tyne eco-system: its fish, insects, plants, birds and mammals.

Now that is a lesson worth learning.

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**You may remember Will giving casting lessons at Haddington Show in 2011. Will has been angling for 40 years, is AAPGAI, SGAIC and FFF qualified and has fished all over the world. He lives locally and gives casting instruction and demonstrations in Edinburgh, the Lothians and across Scotland. You can find out more at [www.lineslinger.com](http://www.lineslinger.com)**



## Tenkara on the Tyne

.....and now for something completely different.

### Japanese

Tenkara, touted in the angling press as a great new discovery is in fact an ancient form of Japanese fly fishing. Originally using bamboo poles up to 15 feet, no reel and horse hair line. It allows flies to be delivered with great accuracy at close range.

### Simple flies

Sound familiar? Anyone who knows The Compleat Angler will realise that this is how we used to fly fish in Britain, but with ash or similar wood instead of bamboo. This is probably a case of convergent evolution for a method which worked well and so developed independently around the world. Tenkara flies are a simple spider-like design, but tied with the hackle bending up rather than down the hook. Similar flies are used in Italy and Spain.

### Broken water

Tenkara was designed for small mountain streams with broken water which require accurate rather than long distance casting and since the Tyne has plenty of broken water, I thought I would give it a try. There are a number of informative websites. TenkaraTalk.com is one of the better ones and was my first port of call. Rods are still only supplied by a couple of companies in the UK and starting at £70 seemed a bit steep for a beginner. Luckily there was a £15 rod on Amazon and sundries on E-bay.

### Casting

So I decided to give it a go one summer evening after work. It was cold, windy and raining - rather typical for this summer. I tried casting: Tenkara rods are very flexible and

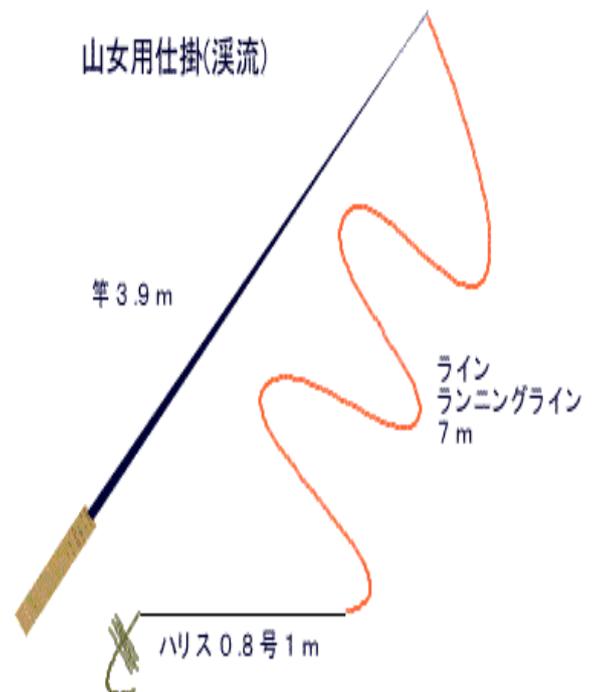
## Adam Love-Rodgers



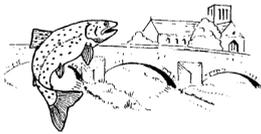
are loaded by the lightest of lines. Imagine a really long 2 weight rod – not the ideal choice in a wind. After 15 minutes I was beginning to think it would never work: then I caught a fish. With no line to let out or take in one has to rely on the spring of the rod in fighting the fish, with such lightweight tackle you can feel, and respond to, every move the fish makes.

### Suited to the Tyne

I will not be getting rid of all my conventional tackle. However this very sensitive and accurate way of fishing a fly does seem particularly well suited to the Tyne.



You don't need to speak Japanese to see just how simple the Tenkara set up is.



## Riverfly Partnership

The **Riverfly Partnership** (RP) is a network of over 50 organisations representing anglers, entomologists, conservationists, watercourse managers, scientists, and statutory bodies working together to protect the water quality of our rivers, to increase our knowledge of riverfly populations and conserve their habitats.

### Riverfly Monitoring Initiative

RP is hosted by the Salmon & Trout Association and one of its many roles is to deliver the Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (RMI) which trains interested groups in one-day workshops to monitor the water quality of their local rivers using a standardised 3 minute kick sample method (also used by SEPA) to record the presence and abundance (at the nymph or larval stage) of seven groups of riverflies which are particularly pollution sensitive. The benefits of RMI include:

- identifying falls in water quality and alerting SEPA for further investigation
- a deterrent to incidental polluters
- gathering long-term biological data to monitor change

### Pollution-sensitive invertebrates

The group of pollution-sensitive invertebrates consists of cased and caseless **caddis** (*Tricoptera*), various **up-wing flies** (*Ephemeroptera*) mayfly, blue-winged olive, flat-bodied nymphs and olives, **stoneflies** (*Plecoptera*) and **freshwater shrimp** (*Gammarus*).



Stonefly nymph



### Good news for the Tyne

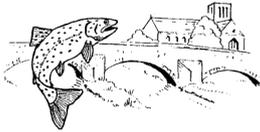
The good news for ELAA anglers is that all of these invertebrates are present in the Tyne, indicating that the water quality is good. It is important therefore that we are able to set up a monitoring programme to ensure that this water quality is protected.

### Vogrie Burn

East Lothian Angling Association has already benefitted from invertebrate sampling, provided by SEPA. When electro fishing results showed a complete absence of fish in the Vogrie Burn we feared that the water was possibly polluted from old mineworkings. However, SEPA found nymphs of pollution-sensitive flies in the burn, including stoneflies, the most sensitive in the group. From this SEPA concluded that the water quality was good, and it was probably impassable culverts preventing fish from populating the burn. So you can see how important it is to have this monitoring system in place.

### Future

In July 2012, following an informal meeting between ELAA Committee members and representatives from other Forth Valley angling associations, ELAA was invited to take up a place on the one-day RMI course as a guest of Llinlithgow Angling Association. This means that ELAA now has one RMI-trained member on the Committee. However, we will need another trained person to enable us to start regular RMI monitoring on the Tyne and we hope to be able to train others in the not-too-distant future.



**Friends of the River Tyne** (formerly The Tyne Trust), is an organisation whose aims closely match those of East Lothian Angling Association and we hope to work together in the future. They are dedicated to raising public awareness of the river; liaising with local government bodies and volunteers to develop the appearance and ecology of the river; gathering data; identifying opportunities for recreation and leisure and encouraging development of local groups who are interested in the river. They have the backing of RAFTS, SEPA and ELC.

**To find out more why not meet their Chairperson, Effie Renton, who is the guest speaker at our AGM, Town House, Haddington on Monday January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 at 7:30 PM.**

### **Poaching and Wildlife Crime - a message from PC Gavin Ross**

Poaching on the River Tyne has been a constant problem this year. Between the police and the Forth District Salmon Fisheries Board Bailiffs five people have been charged, resulting in two successful prosecutions and three cases still to come to court.

There has been a noticeable difference in poaching methods this year. In previous years, if the river was high, there was limited poaching activity. However in 2012 there were several reports of "ripping" in the East Linton area; at the Lynn Falls and the stretch between Knowes weir and ford. Ripping is the use of treble hook(s) to deliberately snag or foul hook fish. Look for people jerking the rod tip as they haul their line through the water. Neither treble hooks, nor spinning tackle are allowed on the Tyne in any case. So no-one has any excuse for having them on the bank.

There are three distinct groups or individuals poaching different beats: Clerkington, the Rat Trap and downstream of East Linton. We know who is poaching the Rat Trap and East Linton/ Knowes areas, but we would still appreciate any information relating to them or to the Clerkington group for whom we have less intelligence.

There has also been evidence of deer poaching, hare coursing and illegal snaring in East Lothian. Please get in touch with me if you have any information on these or other wildlife crimes. Any suspicious activity should be reported to the police or Bill Cunningham, FDSFB Bailiff as soon as possible. **Reports can be made anonymously.**

**Gavin Ross, Wildlife and Environmental Crime Officer**

**Dunbar Police Station 01368 862718 [gavin.ross@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:gavin.ross@lbp.pnn.police.uk)**

**Bill Cunningham 07887835549.**

Thank you for supporting East Lothian Angling Association in 2012